

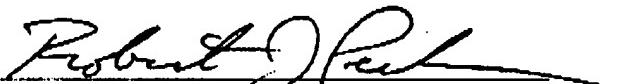
Application No.: 09/998699Case No.: 57121US002REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4-14 and 16-29 stand finally rejected. Claims 3 and 15 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected basic claim, and indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants maintain their disagreement with the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4-14 and 16-29, and reserve the right to re-submit any cancelled claim for further examination. In order to expedite the current prosecution, claims 1-29 have been cancelled in the present amendment, and new claims 30 and 31 have been added, which correspond to claims 3 and 15, respectively, rewritten in independent form. Applicants submit that the present amendment renders the rejection moot, and places the application in condition for immediate allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is therefore requested, and early indication of allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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